

# U.S. Fights Efforts of Terrorists

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As eight Arab terrorists were ending their murderous occupation of an embassy in Khartoum two weeks ago, another was busy making plastic bombs 7,000 miles away—in a hotel room in Jersey City.

His mission failed. The explosives he allegedly planted during Israeli Premier Golda Meir's visit to Manhattan March 4 never went off. But just his presence in the United States was ominous enough. Despite the concerted efforts of a string of government agencies, the Palestinian terrorist organization known as Black September appears to be working hard to establish a beachhead here.

"So far, we've been lucky," says one ranking State Department official, even in light of the precautions already in effect.

Ever since Black September commandos raided the Munich Olympics last fall, the Nixon administration has been taking extraordinary measures to prevent their violence from spreading here.

Now, hardly anyone of "Arabic background" can get permission to enter the country without special clearance from Washington, a procedure that calls for systematic checks of such visa applications against the secret intelligence files of the State Department, the CIA, the Secret Service, the FBI and other agencies.

Even so, the CIA was described by an authoritative source, again just two weeks ago, as considering terrorism one of the greatest problems facing the country.

"There are some people in intelligence," the source reported, "who say it's going to take a major effort to keep these terrorists out of the U.S., to keep them from assisting public figures right here on American soil."

FBI agents have been maintaining close surveil-

lance of some 90 Arab and Arab-American "activists" in the United States who might have links to the terrorist underground. The Immigration and Naturalization Service has been checking on the legal status of Arabic students and non-immigrant Arabic visitors.

Reportedly, however, not even the fanatical Black Septemberists, whose entire membership is estimated at 200 to 300 at most, know more than a few of their own. As a result, it surprises no one that Khalid Duhan Al-Jawari, a well-dressed, highly educated man, was granted entry from Canada this winter. Presumably, his application for a visa triggered no alarm buttons, though State Department officials say they are still trying to make sure it underwent the prescribed security check.

According to the FBI, Al-Jawari entered the United States Jan. 12—just five days after the itinerary for Mrs. Meir's most recent visit here was announced in Jerusalem.

She landed at New York's Kennedy International Airport around 2:40 a.m. on Sunday, March 4. By then, the Black September guerrillas in Khartoum had just ended their bloody takeover of the Saudi Arabian Embassy after murdering two American diplomats and a Belgian colleague captured inside.

Around the same time, from the FBI's account, Al-Jawari was evidently preparing for another grisly exercise—Black September's first known attempt—in the United States in room 516 of Jersey City's Mayflower Hotel. He departed from the hotel sometime during the morning of March 4, leaving behind, agents say, "a number of latent fingerprints," along with some leftover, orange-colored plastic explosive and an extra pair of nine-volt batteries.

But all this was discovered only by subsequent investigation. Acting on a tip, FBI agents and New York police found the bombs first. They were retrieved March 6-7 from the trunks of each of three rental cars. Two had been parked outside the First Israel Bank

and Trust Co. and the Israel Discount Bank Ltd. on Fifth Avenue. The third had been left next to the El Al Israel Airlines Terminal at Kennedy Airport.

After an unpublicized investigation that lasted more than a week, John F. Malone, assistant director of the New York FBI office, said all had apparently been timed to explode at noon on March 4 "to coincide with the arrival of Golda Meir," but they failed to go off because of "an error in the circuitry . . ."

Mrs. Meir's schedule never took her near the cars. But had any of the bombs gone off, Malone said, hundreds of New Yorkers could have been killed. A test detonation of one of the bombs produced a fireball 25 feet in diameter, rising 50 to 75 feet in the air.

"Anyone within 100 yards of the blast could have been fatally injured," Malone reported.

It would have served as bloody punctuation of Mrs. Meir's angry complaints at the Waldorf-Astoria that day about "Arab terrorist blackmail." She said she was glad to see that President Nixon, for one, had told her the United States would never submit to it.

Black September was apparently anxious to claim credit for the violent rebuttal. The bombladen car at the El Al warehouse-terminal, the FBI says, contained "numerous items of literature referring to the Black September organization."

According to an affidavit by FBI agent Edward H. Madden, it also contained fingerprints identical to those found in room 516 of the Mayflower Hotel in Jersey City. Significantly, in obtaining an arrest warrant for Al-Jawari last Thursday, the FBI accused him only of planting the bomb at the El Al terminal. He has fled the country, but the government is apparently convinced that others were involved.

"It would have been a pretty tough job for one man," Malone said, when asked whether the suspect acted alone.

What led the FBI from the car at Kennedy Airport to the hotel in Jersey City remains tightly guarded in-

formation, but it presumably is a product of the government's counter-terrorist campaign. As State Department spokesman Charles Bray puts it, "we know a heck of a lot more about them (Black September) than we did six months ago."

Alarmed by the terrorism at Munich that left 11 Israeli athletes and five Black Septemberists dead, Mr. Nixon ordered formation of a 10-member Cabinet Committee to Combat Terrorism, headed by Secretary of State William P. Rogers, to chart a course both here and abroad.

Emergency Measures were instituted at the same time. In a still-confidential notice, all American embassies and consulates were told to issue no visas to persons from certain countries without approval from Washington. The list of countries remains secret, but informed sources say all are Arabic.

At first, the proscription against automatic granting of visas was complete, but it has now been relaxed to permit their issuance abroad to applicants "personally and favorably known" to the U.S. diplomats at the consulates where they show up. For other applicants who are affected, the check means a five-day wait.

Since last September, more than 28,000 visa applications by Arabs have been checked out in Washington under the special policy, which does not apply to citizens of countries deemed more tranquil. Nine suspected terrorists including "a known leader" of Al Fatah, the leading Palestinian guerrilla organization, have been refused entry; 16 others are under study for possible refusals.

In another early step, the State Department and the Immigration Service last Sept. 27 jointly suspended the practice of letting travelers

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passing through the States spend up to 10 days here without visas. Now, visas are required of everyone, a policy that means an additional workload of 600,000 visas a year.

Since institution of the emergency steps, planning of counterterrorist strategies has been assigned to the inter-departmental Working Group on Terrorism headed by the State Department's Armin H. Meyer, former ambassador to Japan. One of its first chores was to work out a contingency plan in case a Munich-style incident should happen here.

If it does, the FBI will be in charge. The details have been spelled out even to the drafting of a presidential order that can be signed quickly if troops are needed.

With the working group meeting every week at the State Department, usually on Wednesday afternoons, the government has also:

- Ordered tighter security, including armored limousines and armed follow-up cars, for prominent American officials on trips abroad. Armored limousines have also been provided for some U.S. ambassadors in terrorist-ridden nations. At the moment, there are more of those countries than there are armored limousines.

- Suggested that all U.S. diplomats abroad consider varying their work-to-home travel habits.

- Developed contingency plans for terrorist attacks on U.S. missions abroad, including an "emergency watch" for step-by-step policy direction from the State Department's seventh-floor operations center. In the Khartoum crisis, Meyer was summoned within minutes from lunch at a Washington restaurant. He spent the next 35 hours on the seventh floor, hoping to help arrange for the release of the captured diplomats without bowing to the terrorists' substantive demands. At one point, the United States signaled its approval of safe conduct to a third country for both hostages and terrorists, but, Meyer says, "It was rejected by the terrorists."

- Expanded Secret Service and Executive Protective Service protection to include more foreign diplomats and missions here and at the United Nations. Emergency procedures in case of terrorist threats also have been worked out with "selected diplomatic missions in Washington."

- Arranged for special postal checks of mail from suspect areas "at the first indication" of a rash of letter bombs — along with immediate alerts for American Jewish leaders. Since last fall, there have been at least 250 letter bombs put into the mails around the world. Only seven reached the United States, including one that injured a postal worker in New York. Several dozen more intercepted in India had American addresses.

- Started coordinating all counterintelligence reports on terrorism under the working group. About a dozen a day come across Meyer's desk. Because of the terrorist attacks around the world in recent months, says State Department

spokesman Bray, there is also "much more pooling of information with and between foreign governments." In this country, he adds, "the CIA, the Secret Service, the FBI, the Executive Protective Service, our own people, immigration, Interpol, police departments in cities like New York, Washington and Los Angeles—all are part of a common effort."

- Stiffened the anti-hijacking program last December to include screening of all passengers and searches of all hand-carried luggage onto U.S. airlines. In addition, Mr. Nixon has asked Congress to sanction the death penalty for hijackings and kidnappings in which victims are killed.

- Called for worldwide sanctions against terrorist attacks, including an international convention providing for the suspension of air service to countries that fail to punish or extradite terrorists.

Several of the measures, Meyer acknowledges, "have produced some concern among Arab people and Arab-Americans. But we don't for a minute want it to be discriminatory. The Jewish Defense League is also a matter of concern to us."

Beyond that, working group officials say, the immigration service decided on its own, months before

Munich, to check on all foreign students in this country

as expired visas.

In the last quarter of 1972, as a result, 2,071 students were found to be deportable. Of these, 282 were Arabs and most had their problems cleared up, officials say. Forty-one other Arab students left the country on their own and 68 others face deportation proceedings.

Despite these figures, and despite the penchant of terrorists from nation to nation and cause to cause, the focus of the counterterrorist effort here is clearly on the Arab world, especially in light of Black September's far-ranging violence.

One immigration service official, asked about his agency's counterterrorist contributions, said, for example, "at this time, we are checking, in cooperation with other agencies, on Arab students and nonimmigrant visitors."

An FBI spokesman confirmed that the bureau is engaged in "active counterintelligence activity" in the United States against Arab terrorism. And a CIA official called Black September "a priority target" on that agency's agenda.

It all adds up to a major drive, but one, from the view of the working group, that is still strapped for money and manpower. The Treasury Department's Executive Protective Service, for instance, is limited by law to an 850-member force despite congressional approval last year of a law making attacks on any of the 137,000 foreign officials and family members in this country a federal crime.

There are also those on Capitol Hill, such as Rep. John M. Murphy (D-N.Y.), who maintain that there is no hope of effective international air boycotts against countries that harbor sky-jacking terrorists and that unilateral U.S. action is overdue. Murphy also wants a federal police force under the Federal Aviation Administration to take over domestic airport security.

Law enforcement officials concede, however, that there is no fail-safe against terrorism, at least not in a democratic society. "All you can do is keep trying," said one FBI man, "but there's no real way to stop it." Black September, officials say, will strike again. They hope it doesn't happen here.